

PHOENIX

Journal on Music and Dance

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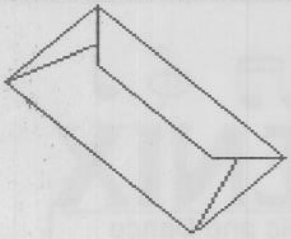
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Readers Write

Kudos to PHOENIX

I read with great enthusiasm your new venture on music and dance, the monthly English magazine, PHOENIX which was a much-awaited journal.

In this context, I request you to devote an article exclusively towards teaching the basics of classical Carnatic music which would go a long way in helping the beginners to understand the vast field of Carnatic Music. I would also like to see a column on forthcoming music concerts incorporated time to time in your magazine.

While congratulating you on this bold venture, I would stress that PHOENIX is a boon to lovees of music and hopefully it would grow further for the benefit of music lovers.

C.G.Badrinath
Bangalore 560069

II

We needed a magazine like PHOENIX very badly. My hearty congratulations to S.N.Chandrasekhar and his colleagues for this venture. A venture like this needs more financial support. I hope more and more companies, especially the corporate sector would come forward and lend the much needed support.

M.Surendranath
Bangalore 560011

III

As rightly mentioned by Prof S.K. Ramachandra Rao, while releasing PHOENIX, that the music fraternity needed a magazine without gossip columns, unwanted and biased reviews. The language of PHOENIX is simple and this is what we needed.

A round up of the music programmes organised in Bangalore and Mysore may be published.

A.R.Shanmugam
Bangalore 560006

IV

PHOENIX, a magazine on music and dance was a necessity to musicians and dancers of our state. A list of forthcoming programmes may be published.

K.N. Gayathri
Bangalore 560018

V

I am surprised and delighted to receive your esteemed magazine, "PHOENIX" dealing with music and dance of our beloved country. I have gone through the first edition of the same. It is also interesting to note that the art critics, S.N.Chankrasekhar, M. Suryaprasad and N. Sundarraj, a distinguished photographer have taken up the good cause beyond their own perview so that it can help the youth to understand the intricacies of our fine arts and be sincere to know about them better.

Your attempt to publish in English, a common language known by all as the art knows no boundaries of language.

The articles are not only about music but also about our cultural items viz dance. May your endeavor to revive the traditions of our ancient art of our country by expressing the good and bad in that field, grow from strength to strength in the coming years. Let our youth wake up now itself before it is too late.

Wishing you all success.

N.Ramiah
Vice President, the Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha, Bangalore 3

VI

I am extremely happy that PHOENIX- a journal on music and dance has come into being. Having gone through the issues of December and Jan-Feb 96 I have found the journal quite interesting with good presentation of events.

I wish that the journal undertakes talents research among both elders and youngsters who hardly have any access to publicity. The get up of the journal is very pleasing. Let the journal grow in stature and stay on for ever to serve will.

D.B. Harindra
Bangalore 560078

Your journal, PHOENIX, is excellent. Every article is praiseworthy. It is a standard one and highly useful to many and many people.

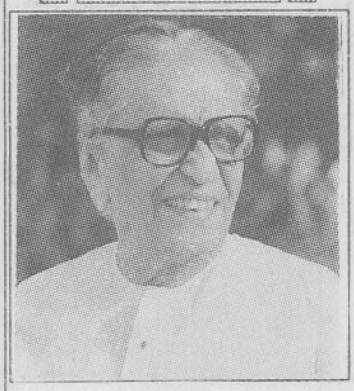
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Dear Reader

Your comments and views are most valuable to us and the others too. We shall gladly publish the best. But, for maximum impact and better coverage, make them brief. Send your comments to:

The Editor, PHOENIX
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009

Editorial



Varnams at Will?

Suddenly it has seemingly dawned on some adherents of Bharatanatyam that there are no Varnams in Kannada. Why there have been attempts in some quarters to get some Varnams made to order! It all sounds so simple that one wonders why great composers like the Tanjore Quartet and nearer, in our own century, a doyen like Dhandayudhapani Pillai spent a life-time to produce a few masterpieces. Nor can it be denied that those Varnams have still remained unequalled and served the purpose of our dancers exemplarily despite their being in languages other than Kannada. Equally inexplicable is why our best known composers did not attempt compositions in their mother tongue.

The answer to such questions should noot be far to seek. All those stalwarts were aware that fine arts knew no barriers of language. They had a language of their own, a language which is one of the most potent unifying forces of our culture. Also, unlike the present times when there is hypocritical talk of emotional integration all-around, while on the other covert under-currents are constantly working against that expediency, parochialism was not known to this part of the country and there was constant inter-action among artistes. Nor had linguistic chauvinism risen its ugly head as yet and there were many who knew almost all the languages of the region.

In this connection, it is worthwhile remembering that the credit for adapting some popular Dasara Padas for dance should go to the all-time great, T. Balasaraswathi. Likewise, the repertoire of many of our own dancers, past and present, abound with padams, javalis and even varnams in Telugu and Tamil. And none the worse for it too. All this doesn't mean that there is no need for Kannada varnams. Far from that. But one certainly shouldn't get obsessed with the idea and resort to translating from other languages. That is ill-advisable for more than one reason. It will conclusively mean that Kannadigas can't stand on their own. In recent times, a few Varnams in Kannada have seen the light of the day. But they have not found favour even with the most ardent proponent of the move. Maybe they fail to fully answer the requirements. There is no doubt that composing a Varnam is more challenging than a kriti or a thillana. It calls for scholarship in the language, musical expertise and the technique of dance to produce results that would go unchallenged. That has to happen spontaneously and cannot be made to order. And it cannot be achieved overnight is a truism!

S.N. Chandrasekhar

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Study on Pallavis

The youth forum of the Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore had organised a 'study circle on Pallavis' by T.R. Subramanyam (TRS) of New Delhi. The programme on March 6, 96 at the Ayyanar College of Music, was one of a series of three held in the city.

In his introductory note, TRS observed that the feeling that Pallavi is the most difficult branch of Carnatic music was a fallacy. The rasikas should learn to enjoy Pallavi singing as much as they do the krithis, he said.

The aspects that differentiate pallavis from krithi singing were the 'Aaas', the spread over of the sahitya, the Arudi or Padagarbha, the Eduppu or the take off point and the Karve or the time gap between the various sahitya aksharas, he explained.

Earlier, pallavis were mainly sung in four kalais (chowka kalai), the take off point being 3/4 eduppu ie., the eduppu after the initial three beats. There were only a few ragas that were selected for elaboration. The times have changed. "We can select the talas and ragas according to our own attainments", he added. The famous "Parimala Rangapathe" in Khamboji was adapted to Bhairavi and syllables were set in sahitya aksharas patterns. The credit for singing the pallavi in this manner should go to GNB, he observed.

TRS explained, the three speeds of 'niraval' done in pallavi singing. He enlightened the listeners saying that it was Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar who introduced 'niraval' singing. TRS stressed that a scheme in setting up a Pallavi was very much necessary.

He later demonstrated a few Pallavis, starting with a simple structure composed of the basic syllables of a sarale varase, he sang some intricate pallavis in Khanda Eka (thrisra nade), Misra Thriputa (thrishra nade), chatushra (sankeerna nade). He even demonstrated, how the sahitya spread in a pallavi embodies in itself the trikala pattern, intelligently,

He concluded by saying that pallavi singing should always be a very melodic experience. It should seem very easy as though the artiste is just playing and singing and not a tiresome experience for the performer or the listener.

V. Krishna



This issue in honour of violin maestro T. Chowdiah is sponsored by his senior disciple and Anklung vidushi H.S. Anasuya Kulkarni and Narayan Kulkarni, Bangalore.

Dancers' Face is their Canvas

Manu Vijay

Dance treatises list Aaharya as one of the Abhinayas - an instrument to communicate the art. Ashraya abhinaya includes make up, costume and jewellery of the dancer and in a broader sense, could mean, stage decor and props too.

Over the years the solo dancers' costume and make-up has changed considerably. One even hears of make-up articles, head dress and ornaments as far back as the Harappan culture as artifacts unearthed in the excavation of the Indus Valley sites. The paintings of Ajanta and Ellora, and the vibrant Chalukyan and Hoysala sculptures are further evidence of the elaborate costumes and jewellery used in those times.

As dance further moved to the temple and then the procenium stage, costume took on a more simpler style allowing for a freedom of movement and clarity of line. Make-up is now used to highlight and etch a dancer's facial lines in order to communicate her expressions to even the last row in a large auditorium. While one does not deny the importance of make-up or costume, the men behind the scene are often ignored. While Bangalore can boast of a few professional make-up men, very little is known about them.



Make up artist B.S.Padmanabha

B.S. Padmanabha

Probably one of the most experienced among them is B.S. Padmanabh whose involvement in the field has been for a near 40 years. Bangalore Srinivas Padmanabh was born in Bangalore in 1941 and developed interest in the art when he was eight. The son of a policeman, Padmanabh was inspired by cinema posters. Initiated into the art by D. Madhava Murthy of Gyana Jyothi Kala Mandir, a well-known drama troupe, Padmanabh's first foray into the dance field was with guru Rajalakshmi's troupe.

He then did make up for the schools of gurus Shiva Rao, Radhakrishna, U.S. Krishna Rao, Sundar Kumar, Revathi Narasimhan and Hema Govindarajan. He is proud of his work with Guru Radhakrishna's troupe for its ballets 'Vishakanya' and 'Shanthala'.

Padmanabh uses the customary pancake for make-up and mixes his own 'rouge' with white lead, China red and face powder. He is aware of the fact that these ingredients, when used in large quantities do lead to allergies, eczema etc. His make-up includes preparing a dancer from head to toe, the hair dress, facial make-up, jewellery, 'arta' etc. He even rents out required temple jewellery, costumes, wigs for ballets etc.

His speciality, he believes, is the lines he gives to highlight a dancer's eyes and brows.

Padmanabh is well versed in stage decor and takes photographs and videos of dance. In addition, he is specially called upon to decorate Gods and Goddesses for utsavams, processions, festivals and for Ganapathy and Rama pandals. While he has no interest in make-up for TV and films, Padmanabh feels that there is a need for professional dance make-up artists to get together under a single banner to solve their problems.

Padmanabha married Dhanalakshmi in 1972 and has a daughter.

B.S.Padmanabha
241 Aralegudi Compound, (Opp Kasi Egg Centre), Cottonpet Main Road, Bangalore 560053 ✆ 661 5202

Indranna

Indranna with seventeen years of experience in the field is another sought after professional make-up artiste. Looks are deceptive and



Indranna giving a finishing touch

Indranna's burly physique does not do justice to the delicacy of line that his make-up reveals.

Indranna, like Padmanabh, began his carrier with a drama troupe and was part of Chowdeshwari Vastra Alankara, his mentors being Shivanna and Ponnuswamy. He is now a regular with P.C. Subramanya, Padmini Ravi, Nupura, Ponniah Natya Academy, Sadhana Sangama and Kinkini schools.

Indranna is an expert in stage decor with flowers, thermocol and cloth and believes that the best decor is one that does not over shadow the dancers. Rather it should allow her to stand out. His forte is his eye make-up, the importance he gives to characterisation for dance ballets, period make up for historical dramas. He has ventured into one national award winning film. But he is not interested in pursuing the field. Indranna undertakes contracts to prepare curtains and back drops for auditoria in the city, as dance make-up alone is insufficient to make a living. Ruminating on the trend of young dancers doing their own make-up, Indranna feels that they should get it done by professional as it gives them time, a tension-free atmosphere and the touch of an expert.

S. Siddaraj

S. Siddaraj, a well known make-up artiste in the field for 20 years, began his carrier as a worker in Minerva mills. A prolonged strike lead him to look for work elsewhere and he turned to Dhanpal and Sons, a drama company in his area.

He first worked on five or six black and white movie films as an assistant. Later he joined Prabhat Kalavidaru to do make-up for their ballets and musicals. He is now mainly involved with Venkatesha Natya Mandira, Nupura, Usha Datar Bhanumathi's troupe, and occasionally for gurus Narmada and Vasantha Vedam. However the mainstay of his work are school and college day functions and factory dramas.

While Siddaraj initially mixed the make-up himself, availability of pancakes, kajal and other reliable material has relieved him of the task. He has worked with director Vasanth Kavali in 'Purandara Dasaru', a serial for the Hyderabad Doordarshan, before the Bangalore Kendra was established. Siddaraj has worked with the Bangalore Doordarshan, festival and special programmes.

Prospects in dance make-up, they feel, are bleak and the meagre earnings thereof do not attract the younger generation for the profession.

Palghat Mani Award to Guruvayur Dorai



This year's K. Puttu Rao Memorial Palghat Mani Award donated by K.K. Murthy, President, Academy of Music, Bangalore will be awarded on the valedictory day, May 31 to mridangam vidwan Guruvayur Dorai.

Veena vidwan, R. Visweshwaran will be awarded the Palani Subramanya Pillai Award, donated by Sudha Rao and A.H. Rama Rao, Ramasudha Charities on May 27.

Mridangam vidwan, M.T. Rajakesari will receive the H. Puttachar Memorial Pre- Parangath Award, donated by H.P. Ramachar.

The 15th Thalavadhyotsav '96 of the Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore will be held from May 27 to 31, 96 at Yavanika and Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore.

Extraordinary Citizen

The much decorated Carnatic Vocalist, R.K. Srikantan was conferred with another distinction on April 8,96. At a simple but impressive function, the Rotary Club of Bangalore conferred the title "Extraordinary Citizen". Among the earlier recipients, Srikantan is the first artiste to receive the distinction.

Chowdiah: Another Name for VIOLIN

V. Doreswamy Iyengar

Chowdiah was an unforget table, dynamic and popular violinist of his times. He was almost a daily performer and a daily traveller, providing his accompaniment in at least 20 concerts a month, without any sign of fatigue or indifference.

He, along with Palghat Mani Iyer was a big draw. There would never be a dull moment in the concerts in which he participated. He had an ingenious knack of inspiring the main musician to come out with his best.

Chowdiah has the distinction of having provided accompaniment to three generation of musicians. In those days of male chauvinism, he had the grace to accompany M.S. Subbulakshmi despite objections of some male musicians. Among those whom he accompanied most were Ariakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Musuri Subramanya Pillai, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, G.N.B, Madurai Mani and Alathur Brothers. It was a sight to see them on a dais along with Chowdiah and to hear the inspired music which is still green in my memory.

Very often Chowdiah would remember with gratitude that it was his guru, Bidaram Krishnappa who made him what he was. Krishnappa was bent on making Chowdiah a violinist to reckon with. Chowdiah's popularity mostly rested on his invention of the seven-stringed violin which had become a rage in those days, though shrouded in controversy. But he stuck to his guns and emerged as a most sought after violinist of his times. The motivation and story behind this invention is very interesting.

Those were mikeless days. Violinists were at a disadvantage when they had to accompany a vocalist with a powerful voice. Hence he was bent on finding a device to increase the volume of the violin. Besides he had a peculiar urge to do something original. Thus came the idea of adding three more strings to the violin. He had to struggle hard and had to invent new bowing and fingering techniques to tame the new violin to bring it under control.

The next problem was that of bringing it to light which he dare not do without the knowledge and approval of his guru. Chowdiah knew that Krishnappa, being a purist, would throw cold water on his experiment. He was waiting for an opportunity to bring his experiment to his notice.

One evening Krishnappa was to sing at Veena Seshanna's house and Chowdiah was to accompany him on the violin. To start with he played the four stringed variety. Towards the end, he hesitantly took out the seven stringed violin and started tuning it. This invited a fierce look from his guru who asked him why he had changed the violin which was sounding all right. Chowdiah nervously told him that he wanted to try his seven-stringed violin. Krishnappa said, "four stings are not enough for you to spoil the violin? Do you want four more strings?"

This dialogue attracted the attention of Seshanna who was curious to know how the new violin sounded. He asked Krishnappa to give the boy a chance to show his experiment. Krishnappa was left with no option. The concert concluded with a tremendous success for Chowdiah. Seshanna also seemed pleased with the novelty. He asked Krishnappa to allow Chowdiah to play the new violin thereafter which might bring him fame and money. How true was Seshanna's prophecy!

It was my privilege to give a number of concerts in combination with him. Though he was much senior to me in every respect, he offered himself very gladly to play with me. Needless to say that this combination gave me a big boost. I think this was the first Veena-Violin combination which started in the early fifty's and went on till the end of his life. I can never forget his affection.

Chowdiah was very sensitive to artistic excellence and spontaneously responded to it. In one of the concerts of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar in Madras, he has the accompanist. After a memorable rendering of the krithi "Evarikai" (Devamanohari), Chowdiah bowed his head to the maestro and said, "It looks as if Thyagaraja has composed this song only for you. Your rendering of it is fit for you. I pray that you keep singing like this for hundred years".

Ariakudi spontaneously replied, "yes I shall do this, provided you accompany me for as many years".

On another occasion Chowdiah was playing for T.R. Mahalingam (flute) in Bidaram Krishnappa Rama Mandiram in Mysore. Mali's Bhairavi was aesthetic. Chowdiah was so

moved that he kept down his violin and asked Mali to continue. "I don't want to disturb the divine atmosphere you have created", he said. Once Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer was singing in the Bangalore Gayana Samaja. T.N. Krishnan was on the violin. Chowdiah was present in the audience. After Semmangudi's beautiful rendering of Shankarabharana, it was Krishnan's turn. Chowdiah said to Krishnan, "Don't be in a hurry. I expect a good Shankarabharanam from you. Give us a leisurely Alapana".

Krishnan felt encouraged and, of course, rose to his expectation. A large-hearted man that he was, Chowdiah used to say that the younger generation of violinists were not only doing very well but were developing the art further.

Chowdiah's obsession with his car was proverbial. He thought no end of his Baby Austin which often landed him in trouble. He made most of his journeys by this self-driven car.

The Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar, who had observed his adventurous journies, once sent for him and asked why not go in for a better car. It was an indirect hint to Chowdiah to ask the Maharaja for a good car. But Chowdiah couldn't take the hint. He boasted of his car and the good service it was giving him.

Days after this meeting, a close official of the Maharaja told him how he had missed a golden opportunity of getting a decent car from the Maharaja. It was then that he realised how his pride had let him down!

It is surprising, how in the midst of a busy schedule of professional engagements, he found time for his disciples among whom may be mentioned the names of R.K. Venkatarama Sastry, V. Sethuramiah, C.R. Mani, Alagiri Swamy, V. Ramanathan, K.J. Venkatachar, H.S. Anasuya, Nanjunda Swamy et al.

He composed a number of krithies and Tillanas during the last few years of his life. He would say that his ultimate desire was to die in harness, without being a nuisance to anyone. God granted his desire. He passed away on January 19, 1967 without any suffering whatsoever.

He had performed the previous day and had accepted advance for a few performances ahead. It is very rarely that we come across a charismatic personality like him. The monumental, violin-shaped Chowdiah Memorial Hall, the only one of its kind, is there to keep his memory evergreen, thanks to K.K. Murthy, the President of the Academy of Music Bangalore.◆

GANASUDHA

H N Rajanna





Top: N.Ramani with V.K. Raman (flute), H.K.Narasimha Murthy (violin), N.G.Ravi (mridangam) and B.Rajasekhar (morching). Bottom: V.Kalavathi with Nalina Mohan (violin), B.Dhruvaraj (mridangam) and Vyasa Vittala (kanjira)

Ganasudha Sangeetha Sabha, of Bhadravathi is striving for the promotion of music for the last 25 years.

Under the leadership of H.S. Nagaraja Rao, secretary, the sabha organised a three day festival of music at the Girls High School auditorium, Bhadravathi which was inaugurated by the flute maestro N. Ramani. N. Anantha Padmanabha Rao of Bangalore was the chief guest .

N. Ramani and his disciple V.K. Raman of AIR, Bangalore featured in the inaugural flute concert ably supported by H.K. Narasimha Murthy (violin), N.G. Ravi (mridangam) and B. Rajashekar (Morching).

Young V. Kalavathi of Bangalore gave a pleasing vocal concert with the support of Nalina Mohan (violin) B.Dhruvaraj (mridangam) and Vyasa Vittala (Kanjira).

On the last day T.V. Ramaprasad, a young vocalist from Bangalore gave a neat attractive performance accompanied by B.U. Ganesh Prasad (violin) N.G. Ravi (mridangam) and Vyasa Vittala (kanjira)

Calling AIR

It was a propitious start for the period, the warm morning air on Feb 7 (8.30 a.m.) freshening up with the strains of a wholesome Charukeshi (Kripayapalaya). The artiste was R.K. Srinivasa Murthy, the senior vainika. If the alap had a meditative approach to arrive at a soulful picture of the raga, the kriti was euphonic in its impress, the vibrant notes deftly appropriating with the words.

It was again Charukeshi on veena on the next day (9.30 a.m). But it was hardly half as impressive. R.K. Prakash was the artistes. But Kedaragoula (Neelakantam) changed the very complexion of the recital. It was more reposeful so as to give his Thodi (Ambanadupai) a headstart. Thodi easily offered surges of optimism. Earlier, from Madras (8.30 a.m.) Ashok Ramani who definitely figures more frequently on the city stage, fused Shankarabharana (Nannu Brova) with an array of endearing 'sancharas'. The lyrical appeal in the kriti accented its instant likeability.

Prabhudev Sardar, the recipient of the year's State Sangeet-Nrutya Academy award, was featured in a concert at 9.30 p.m. (February 9) by Dharwad. Though he has a deep, sonorous voice, Chandra-Prabha, perhaps a raga he has coined himself, could not make an impact, a distinct imagery failing to emerge. But Usha Chippalkatti's Madhuvanti the next day (12.30 pm.) stood out for its emotional sensitivity.

What a contrast the South Zone Cultural Hook-Up (Feb 18) turned out to be! Shubhasri Murthy's Janaranjini (Smarane Sukham) itself left one wondering how she was able to make it to the distinguished slot. Nor were her Pantuvarali (Kashi Vishalakshi) and Kambodi (Ratnakanchuka) any better. Her rendition freely allowed the straying of odd swaras to rob it of any fidelity.

That is certainly not the only reason why Jaishree Prakash's veena recital next morning (9.30 a.m.) sounded refreshing. The Nata Pancharatna kriti provided an excellent start to Jaishree. It was sustained by a robust Thodi (Rajuvedala). A cascading variety of 'sancharas' enhanced the aural elegance of the lovely Thyagaiah kriti. The concluding 'devaranama' in Kanada was as appealing in its model overtones. The melodic grace that is the forte of duets, is unmistakable in the singing of Kavitha and Triveni, popularly known as Saralaya Sisters. Marugelara (Jayantashri) gave their concert (9.30 a.m, February 2) a lovely start. Their alap for Purvikalyani flowed gracefully, meandering over all the salient 'sancharas', the kriti Gnyanamosaga itself emerging on a steady gait. It was a reassuring recital to prove that the duo is is not allowing grass to grow under their feet.



NSR

Anuradha Madhusudan

Vinayak Torvi's Hindustani vocal recital (8.30 a.m, February 22) was as refreshing. His Ahir Bhairav was highly evocative, a cascading array of taans, haunting 'sargams' and a titillating layakari heightening its structure. The Jonpuri number was as appealing for its lyrical quality - Anjikinyatakayya. For the night's slot, Vinayak gave a more detailed airing for Maru-Behag. The familiar Sakhiya Hona (vilambit) and Sakhibina Bajay (drut) angas had a reverberating lilt in them. The enunciation in either case was remarkable for its fervour.

Rupa Sridhar's vocal (9.30 a.m February 24) was not half as inspiring. Neither the initial Mohana -Kalyani (the unfailing Bhuvaneswariya) nor Thodi (Sarasijanabha) could rise to any significant heights. Rather, there were too many slips in their structure for her to scale above the mediocre level. But B.Raghuram's violin solo (8.30 a.m February 29) was steady and tuneful. His Purvikalyani (Gnyanamosaga) with its sonorous 'sancharas' created a fine musical atmosphere.

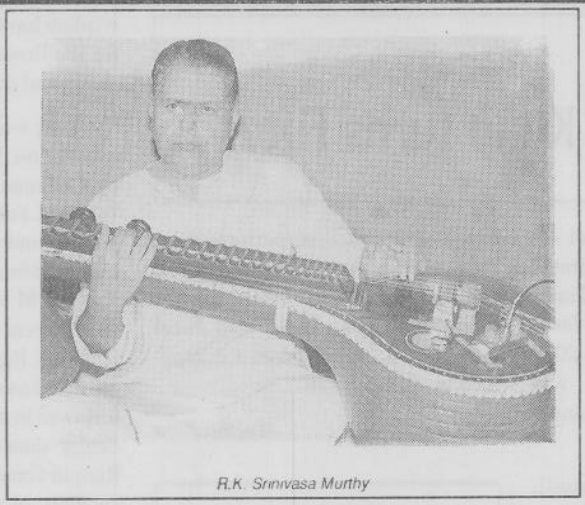
That same night (10.30 p.m) Rajeev Taranath was in his elements when he intonated Chandra Nandan on his Sarod. The brief alap itself cut the contours of the soulful raga con-

NSR



Vinayak Torvi

vincingly, while the 'gat' helped forward with a flurry of resonant 'gamaks', Rajeev's technical virtuosity making an irresistible impact on the listener.



R.K. Srinivasa Murthy

Known for his baritone, M. Raghavendra has an impressive style as evidenced in his Sarasiruhasana (Nata) on March 8, 8.30 a.m. His Thodi (Dachukova) was marked for its masterly layakari, his 'manodharma' in the 'swara prasthara' easily rising the melodic report to a crescendo.

As precise and methodical was the enunciation of Begada and Thodi by D. Balakrishna on the veena (same day 9.15 a.m). His command over the nuances like Gamakas and rhetorical effects was commendable. His controlled spontaneity and technical assurance in the use of the different registers had their desired aesthetic impact in Kaddanuvariki (Thodi). It was a sprightly recital. M.R. Sashikant, also a disciple of V. Doreswamy Iyengar was equally impressive (March 10). His Bhairavi (Odibarayya) at once testified that he is gaining ground, especially in the aspect of rhythm. A reassuring recital.

NSR



D. Balakrishna

As revealing was the violin solo of Vanamala Dikshit in the South Zone Hook-Up (March 10, 10 p.m). Her instrumental timbre was light and weighty to suit the modal form and lyrical need which itself is a sign of maturity. This was evident as much in the opening Mahaganapate (Abhogi) as in the Kalyani (Himachala) number that followed. Vanamala's alap for Thodi was neat, but fell short in its structural demands. The kriti (Sri Krishnam Bhaja) was accented with some racy 'swara' forays.

The veena recital of Bhagyalakshmi (March 11, 8.30 a.m) was not as evocative. Though her Begade kriti Vallabha was neat, her alap for Shuddha-Saveri could not scale the pales of pedestrian level, betraying lack of seriousness. The kriti Subramanyena was passable in its lyrical demands. But veteran V. Deshikachar's flute (March 12, 8.30 a.m) was remarkable for its tonal flourish. His Behag coaxed out of the instrument, some delectable 'sancharas' of placid calm alternated with vibrant rhythm. The violin support by M. Nagaraj undoubtedly enriched the recital's aesthetic overtones.

T.R. Vembu is as seasoned an artiste. But the vocal (9.30 a.m the same day) was a patch on the earlier concert. Even the lovely Chakravaka piece, Idisamayamu could not reveal any aesthetic sensitivity in the rendition. Shaila Subramanyam (8.30 a.m March 13) was a shade better. Her Shankarabharana (Swararagasudha) was true to form, but there were too many slips in 'swarasthanas' that could be ignored. In comparison, the veena concert of R. Veena was more evocative. Vasanta-Bhairavi (Needayarada) certainly gave her a steady start. As pleasing was Simhendramadhyama (Needuchara-namule). Indeed, there was nothing extraordinary in the rendition. But there were no let-ups in the fingering and that was a great relief.

But another veena artiste Anuradha Madhusudan (9.30 a.m March 15) showed marked improvement in tonal timbre and modal imagination. Mokshamu (Saramati) had a graceful delineation, giving Anuradha a fine start. Her alap for Bilahari was also convincing, most of the familiar 'sancharas' in tact. But the kriti failed to fully live upto expectation, repeated slips marring its overall impact.

ESSENCE

Attention Organisers

Music and dance institutions are requested to send their programmes to the Editor, **PHOENIX,** 138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar Bangalore 560009 before the first week of every month.

Bombay Beat

Amjad Ali Khan turns Fifty

Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan's 50th birthday was celebrated in Bombay by The Economic Times by organising a three day music festival, "Raag Yatra", from March 20 at the Nehru Centre, Mumbai. It was sponsored by Godrej-GE Appliances Ltd.

Amaan Ali Bangash (Sarod), Ustad Zakir Hussain (Tabla), Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (Vocal), Gundecha Brothers (Dhrupad), Shahid Parvez (Sitar), Pandit Kashinath Mishra (Tabla) and Ustad Shafaat Ahmed Khan (Tabla) participated in the celebrations.

Lec Dem

A lecture demonstration on a new broadbased, thorough foundation for Indian classical and film music was organised by Karaikudi Subramanian at the Sri Shanmukha- nanda Sabha, Bombay on March 20, 96.

Dance Ensemble

'Jaya Jaya Sankara', a dance ensemble was presented by Sri Raja Rajeshwari Bharata Natya Kala Mandira at the Sivaswamy auditorium, Chembur.

Rhythm Ensemble

A Rhythm Ensemble by Zakir Hussain and thavil maestro A.K. Palanivel was organised at Rang Bhavan, Mumbai on February 29.

They were supported on percussion by Selva Ganesh (kanjira), Bhavani Shankar (pakwaj), Vijay Chauhan (dholki), and Fazal Qureshi (tabla). Ustad Sultan Khan played sarangi.

The concert began with an interpretation of the Tandava, Shiva's dance of destruction, performed by Zakir with Sivamani and Taufiq. Fazal and Bhavani Shankar joined the trio for the next piece. Zakir and Fazal then played a lengthy duet accompanied by Sultan Khan.

-Geetha Raja

Cassettes Released

Bhandarakeri Mathadeesha Sri Vidyesha Teertharu released two audio cassettes on Vadiraja and Vijayadasa kritis rendered by R.K. Padmanabha and D.V. Nagaajan and M.S. Sheela and books supporting the cassettes, on March 31, 96 at the jam packed Rama Mandira, Auditorium Bangalore.

After a *goshti gayana* by over 150 artistes, R.K. Padmanabha, Secretary of the Sharada Kala Kendra, welcomed the participants and spoke on the activities of the kendra in bringing out number of audio cassettes and books supporting them. He also announced the names of donors.

Later Pushkarachar gave a discourse on specialities of Vadiraja's kritis. Vidyesha Teertharu blessed with his presidential address.

Seminar on Dasa Sahitya

Scholars and artistes, led by Prof S.K. Ramachandra Rao paid glowing tributes to the legendary mystics of Karnataka whose lyrics have come to be referred to as Dasa Sahitya. These lyrics purporting Bhakti and worldly wisdom have contributed immensely for the flowering of the twin arts of music and dance in the region.

They were speaking at a two-day seminar on March 16-17, organised by the Ponniah Lalitakala Academy. While Leela Ramanathan, Tulsi Ramachandra, Shanta Jayatee-rtha, Lalitha Srinivasan, K. Ramamurthy Rao and M.V. Subramanya spoke on the different aspect of Dasa Sahitya, Kovaladi Rangarajan (Trichy), demonstrated on some traditional 'mattus' followed in the rendition of the lyrics. Senior dancers Tara Priyadarshini, Ranjini Ganesh, Manu Vijay and the students of the Ponniah Academy demonstrated how the rich Dasa Lore has enriched the dance repertoire.

SNC

Railway Concession to Artistes

Efforts of Prathibha Prahlad of Prasidha Foundation in getting 75% concession in II class sleeper and 50% in I class in Indian Railways have finally borne fruits.

Railway Board of Ministry of Railways in its notification No TC II/ 2055/93 Dt Feb 22, 96 has announced this concession effective from April 1, 96.

Alleppey Venkatesan, Secretary, of the Carnatic Musicians' Forum of India, welcoming the railway concessions to artistes in the Railway budget, said that photo-identity cards issued by the forum to the members could be presented along with concert invitation at ticket counters to ensure that the concessions reach only eligible persons.

The forum also requested music organisations not to scale down the remunerations to artistes consequent to the concession to ensure that benefits could reach the musicians.

Tuneful Encounters-4

Uncle Handel of the Ivories

S.N. Sivaswamy

The late Handel Manuel was one of the most extraordinary musical talents with whom I had the privilege to move closely while I was in Madras.

Handel Manuel's attentiveness as a child to music and ability to play correct musical chords on the key board far beyond one's expectations from a tiny tot prompted his parents to call him by the first name Handel (after George Frederick Handel, the celebrated seventeenth - eighteenth century composer of operas and oratorios that made musical history).

Handel Manuel was in All India Radio as a pianist but he did a number of jobs that he liked, such as announcing programmes, conducting children's varieties (he was uncle Handel to hundreds of children), scheduling recorded music, and auditioning western music artistes. Besides the piano, he played the church organ and the electric organ which was new to Madras and we had to go to Madras Christian College at Tambaram for booking the instrument for each concert.

It was war time (Second World War) and musical troupes consisting of the most popular musicians of the day used to tour places where allied forces ware stationed. Madras was one such place. The artistes in these troupes, after once hearing Handel Manuel playing on the Piano insisted on his accompanying them in all their performances. In fact, there were efforts to make him a member of the troupe (called ENSA) and take him around the world, but Handel was content to stay in Madras.

From Handel Manuel I learnt the rudiments of Western music, the Major and Minor scales, symphony and polyphony, harmony and melody, notes and chords, soprano and contral to, bass and tenor, pianissimo and FORTISSIMO and so on. He also taught me how to read musical notations enough to turn the pages while he was engaged in coaxing the melodies on the keyboard with his magical fingers. From this good friend I learnt how to pick the notes of familiar ragas on the piano like Sankarabharanam and Keeravani.

One of Handel Manuel's favourite pastimes was to visit, along with a couple of our colleagues, the race course at Guindy. Neither he nor any of my other friends had the resources or the inclination to indulge in horse racing. What they used to do was to invest five rupees in an event called 'lucky five'. Horses running in the day's races coming within the first three places in each of the races won a modest sum. I used to send five rupees with Handel to try my luck. Once just once, he brought back forty five rupees to me - a small fortune in those days, but more than sufficient to cover a visit to the local Globe cinema to see a Hollywood Musical, with a 'Cuppa' thrown in for good measure! And these was money left for buying a 'Sruti box' for my wife.

AAKAAR
Summer Camp in Bharathanatyam

Ponniah Lalithakala Academy, Bangalore is conducting a three week intensive training for dance aspirants from May 6 to May 26, '96.

The areas of Teaching are:

Slokas, yoga, adavus, theory, practical, music and guest lectures on different aspects relevant to dance and dancer. The classes will be conducted by exponents in the field.

Detailed programme will be informed at the time of admission. Candidates are expected to attend the classes from 6.30 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. The course in planned as day boarding with suitable, well planned and balanced diet, breaks and drinks. Interested candidates between the age group of 10 to 18 years are requested to contact: Padmini Rao, Director, for further details.

Register before **24th April, '96.**

For Details Contact:
Padmini Rao, Director - Aakaar,
429, Ponnaiah Lalithakala Academy Middle School, II Cross Road V.V.Puram, Bangalore -560004.
Telephone: 6670013

WHAT NANDIKESWARA DIDN'T FORESEE!

Manu Vijay

The Abhinaya Darpana puts down some specification for a dancer, form, figure, eyes, etc. While Nandikeshwara, it seems, concerned himself only with physical appearances. I on the other hand, feel that other social requirements must also be fulfilled to make a dancer.

Financial considerations, I think play an important role, as they do in all other walks of life. If a student's parents can afford her guru's fees initially, considerable savings are required to turn a little girl into a beautiful and graceful dancer. The Rangapravesha, of course, could drain considerable savings. Costumes, jewellery, auditorium, brochures, photographs, stage decor, not to mention the Guru dakshina, musicians' fees and VIP treatment to countless guests and family tea, coffee , dinner et al is enough to scare a middle class family off the art.

As if that were not enough, every step forward from then on is an Herculean task, performances have to be regularly funded if the daughter wants to become a dancer of repute. Prestigious sabhas 'invite' dancers for programmes, but their coffers cannot fund her. The pittance given by the State does not even cover expenses and hence, daddy's pockets get lighter by each programme. The Guru's fees sky rockets as the girl's learning advances, and a few thousands are demanded for every 'marga'. By the time the daughter is advanced enough to even cover expenses, daddy is well on the way to bankruptcy!

Social contacts are, of course, yet another consideration,. Well placed families, with friends in high places acquire programmes for corporate seminars, conferences and for foreign delegations, while those without the above will find their aspirations nipped in the bud.

Public relations are a must. Regular social calls, with a dinner thrown in with the powers that be, would help a long way in furthering that career.

In Lighter Vein

In addition, there are a few characteristics that a potential dancer should not have. An interfering family probably tops the list. Well meaning parents who insist on pushing uninterested or untalented children are every guru's nightmare. Tender hearted grand parents who wish to see the darling grand daughter in silk and finery on stage well before they are incapable; relatives, aunts and uncles who always seem to know better about how a dancer must be taught, can be more hindrance than a help.

Now that I had added to the list of what a dancer should be like, I proceeded to put away pen and paper, while a thought struck me. What about talent, I wonder? That old-fashioned orthodox ingredient that went into making a dancer of yester years. What about hard work, perseverance, a deeper understanding of the art and sensibility about Indian culture? Don't we also need to throw in a keen ear for music, a respect for Indian art and mythology and a deeper intelligence that allows one to view the art with a futuristic eye? The requirements, I find seem to be mounting up.

While we subject children to torturous entrance tests to enter nursery school, why aren't dance institutions and gurus more stringent about the students they take in? Parents play as important a role in the making of a dancer, as they do in child's education and need to provide a solid, traditional India upbringing and play a supportive, but not pushy role. Probably then we'll have 99% scoring future performers, vis-a-vis our PU scores.◆

Agenda for May

Bangalore Gayana Samaja

On May 12, 96 at 4-15 pm Aruna Sairam sings at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja.

Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha

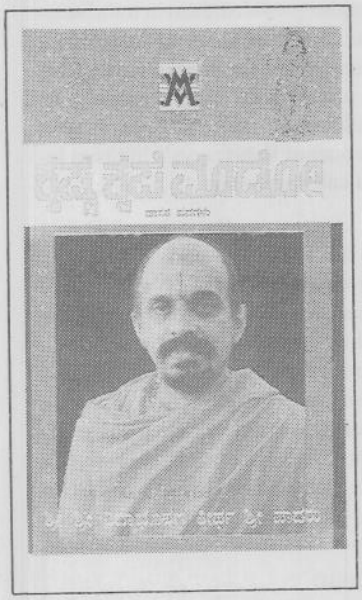
Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha, Bangalore celebrates its 10th anniversay with a vocal recital by S. Shankar on May 11, 96 at 6 pm. Other programmes are:

May 17:Harini and Sharada (Vocal)
V.K. Raman (Flute)
May 18:Master Kishan (Veena)
N.R.Prashant (Vocal)
May19: Rajkamal (Flute)
T.V.Ramaprasad (Vocal

ALL ARE WELCOME

Cassette Causerie

Krishna Kripe Maado: MV Live cassettes: (MVD 2012 - Stereo). 60 Minutes. Rs 35/-



As the title suggests, this cassette is a selection of devotionals. They are rendered by Sri Vidyabushana Sripadaru, the saint-singer whose euphonic music has won him fans even among the learned and laity. As his wont, the swamiji's singing lays stress on the lyrical essence of the compositions, each in a tune that enhances the emotional appeal. It makes good listening, the more than half-a-dozen Dasara Padas and a couple of verses from Krishna Karnamrita running like a bhajan session.



Shatatantri Veena (Santur) Hindustani Instrumental. Sangeetha (6 ECDB - 574 Stereo)

The sub-title on the cassette says "In combination". Perhaps rightly so as the main artiste R. Visveswaran (Madras) is less known in the Hindustani world of music than his 'tabla saathi' Fazal Qureshi. But as one listens to Visvesh's delineation of the weighty Puriya-Dhanashri, it is evident that he is no novice either. Indeed, they make a pleasant two-some, combining understandingly to produce an enjoyable melodic fare.

Visvesh is a disciple of the renowned Santoor maestro Shivkumar Sharma. He is well versed in both the Carnatic and Hindustani styles, though his first love is the latter. But for a short 'dhun' at the end, the entire run in devoted to a single raga, the air spanning the whole gamut from a lively alap, graceful jod, lilting jhala to 'gat' in two speeds. Fazal's tabla 'sathi' complements the rhythmic 'bandhish' with skill and imagination.

Dakshinottaram, a Sangeetha Cassette, P6 ECDB, Stereo. Rs 35/-

Vocalist Shamala G Bhave is known for her innovative ideas. This latest cassette of hers is another such noveltty. The bill starting with a sloka is nothing new. But the way the familiar compostitions are presented is. In the sense, she tries to bring out the paralells of the ragas in the two systems such as Bhaiavi and Mayamalavagoula, Thodi and Shubha-Pantuvarali, Sohani and Hamsanandi and Amir Kalyali.

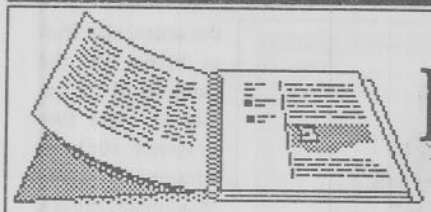
Shamala has many more such cassettes under the same banner. Some interesting titles are: Jaya Jaya Deva Hare, Jina Geeta Ganga, Santa Gana Saurabha, Dasa Gana Ganga, etc. There are a couple of classical collections to boot, besides a Jugalbandi, with Nagamani Srinath. They speak for her versatility.

SNC



A listing in 'today's edngagements' column of Bangalore's English Daily, Deccan Herald read thus:

"Inauguration of the festival by Madurai Seshagopalan and vocal concert by H.N. Nanjegowda"



Review

SNC

Ksetrayya made Accessible

MUVVAGOPALA PADAVALI (Telugu Lyrics of Kshetrayya): *With poetic English translation and notes on Aesthetics by Dr B. Rajanikantha Rao. Publishers: Rajani Publications, "Vibhavari" SF(1)i(B) Venus Apartments, Tikkle Road, Vijayawada 520010. PP.342. Price Rs.250/-.*

The repertoire of Indian classical dance, more particularly Bharathanatyam, is sustained by a wide variety of musical compositions. Most of these musical pieces are by saint-singers and the songs are their outpourings about their deep love to their chosen deities. They are as popular on the concert stage as on the dance arena down the ages.

If works like the Jatiswaram (or Swarajati), Varnam (both thana and pada variations), and Thillana serve the Nritta aspect of dance, there are as many Padams, Javalis, Keertanas and devotionals to serve its counterpart - Abhinaya.

Among them the Javalis with their amorous overtones and Padams with their variegated Nayika-Nayaka 'bhedas' offer excellent scope for dancerly interpretation. They are verily test pieces to make an assessment of the dancers' sensibilities.

These compositions are extant in all the southern languages, besides Sanskrit. The best known lyricists in this category are Jayadeva (Sanskrit) and Kshetrayya (Telugu), each addressing himself to his chosen deity, Jagannath and Muvvagopala respectively. They are love lyrics, but the lover in each case is the divine entity. Likewise, the poet identifies himself as the Nayika, personified as Radha in the case of Jayadeva and as Mohanangi in the case of Kshetrayya.

Their lyrics exemplify their ecstatic love for the Lord, the sentiment often appropriating itself to erotic love. Hence they are ideal for Abhinaya and have become an essential part of dance repertoire.

But while the Ashtapadis have been made available with exhaustive translations in all the languages, the Padams of Kshetrayya are found only in Telugu, collected and annotated by renowned musicians like Manchala Jagannatha Rao and Voleti Venkateswarulu. Hence dancers in the other regions have had to seek explanations from Telugu scholars before including them in their repertoire.

In this background, the book under review will be welcomed by all Kannada and Tamil oriented musicians and dancers. It would be an asset in their creative pursuits. Having been a senior official in the Ministry of Broadcasting, the author has been able to appreciate the needs and requirements of artistes in such cases. Hence he has not only given exhaustive translations of the Padams, but also provided them in transliteration. His brief notes on the different Nayikas and the Nayika attributable to each Padam should enhance its usefulness to dancers. Rajani's brief account of Kshetrayys's life is as lucid and interesting.

As an author Rajani is well-known in the world of musical literature through his Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitramu which won for him the Sahitya Akademi award and the two monographs on Kshetrayya and Ramadasu in English. But the present book is certainly of greater significance. It is a monumental work that fills a long felt need in the world of art and literature, and especially dance.

Power of Music

Itis rare to find a man of music devine,
Great music will even savages refine,
It is a mystery none can to music confine.

It is high beyond the ravates of time,
It is universal not bound by any clime,
It is sheer joy to har melodies sublime,
To hate beauties of music is a crime.

If a man's life is a shoer of melody,
His life will never end in tragedy,
The art of supreme music can embody,
All pleasures making life a comedy

M.C.Narasa Raju,Chirala

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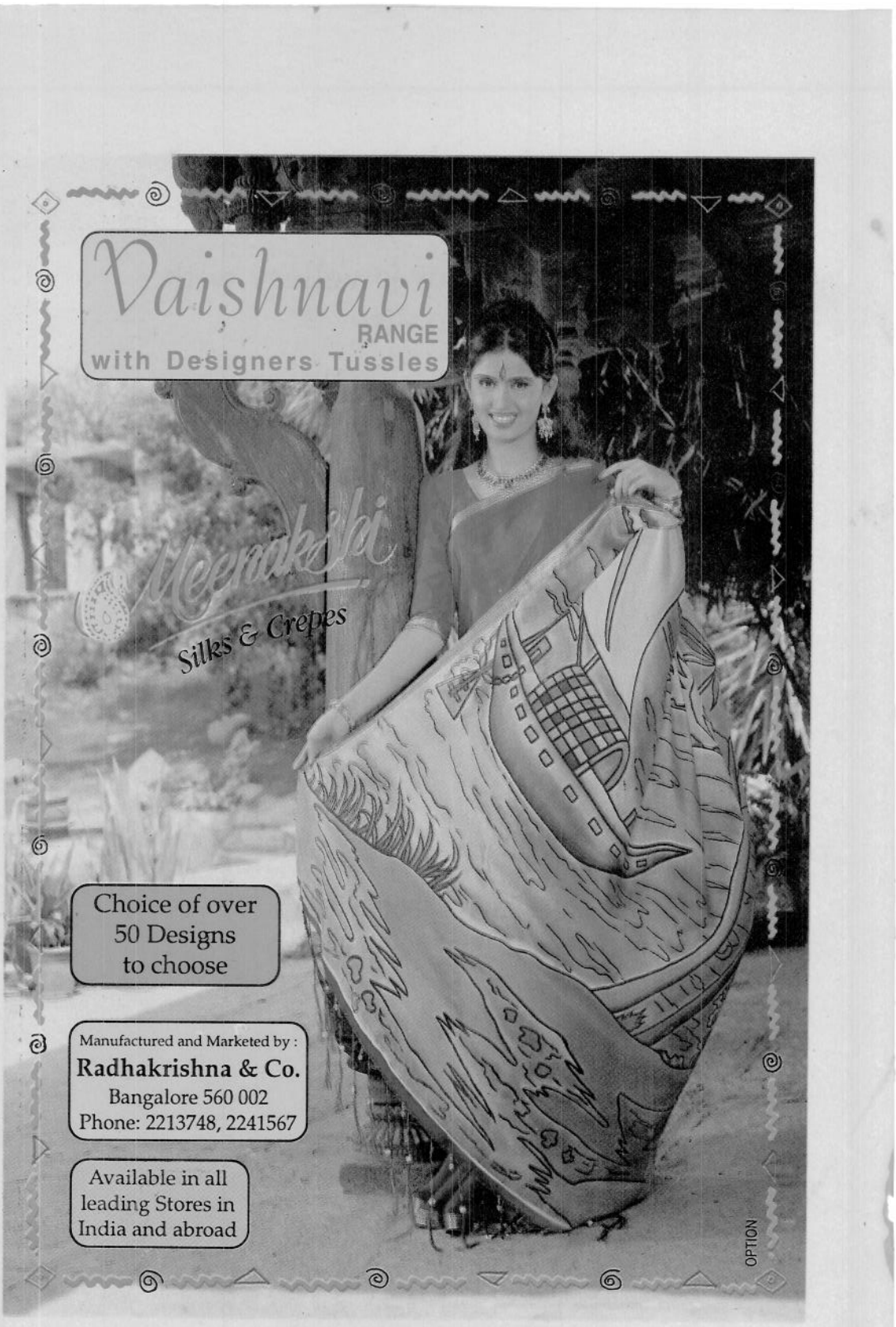
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